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## ZARIADRES AND ZARĒR

By MARY BOYCE

IT is now almost a century since Rapp cited,<sup>1</sup> among Greek texts relating to Persian customs and beliefs, the charming tale of Zariadres and Odatis, preserved for us by Athenaeus on the authority of Chares of Mytilene.<sup>2</sup> The story is in brief as follows : Hystaspes and his younger brother Zariadres were said by the people of their land to be born of Aphrodite and Adonis. Hystaspes ruled Media and the lands below it, Zariadres the region above the Caspian Gates up to the Tanaïs. Beyond the Tanaïs lived the Marathi, ruled by Omartes, whose daughter Odatis was the most beautiful woman in Asia.<sup>3</sup> Odatis dreamt of Zariadres, and loved him ; and he too loved Odatis through dreams. He sought her vainly in marriage, for her father did not wish to give her to a stranger. Soon after, Omartes held a marriage-feast attended by his own kinsmen and nobles, and bade Odatis give a cup of wine to him whom she wished to marry. Zariadres, forewarned by Odatis, came in full haste across the Tanaïs, accompanied only by his charioteer, and entered the hall in Scythian dress as, weeping, Odatis slowly filled the cup. She recognized him with joy, and he carried her off. This tale, Chares states, was greatly esteemed by the barbarians of Asia, who painted scenes from it on the walls of temples, palaces, and even private houses, the nobles often giving the name of Odatis to their own daughters.

A few years after Rapp's article had appeared, Spiegel<sup>4</sup> pointed out the striking similarity between this story and a story told by Firdausi about Guštāsp, patron of Zoroaster.<sup>5</sup> This story is somewhat inflated, and lacks the charm of the old legend. It tells how the young Guštāsp, slighted by his father Luhrāsp, leaves the latter's court at Balkh and goes with a large retinue to India. His brother Zarēr overtakes him and persuades him to return ; but after a brief period of further discontent, Guštāsp slips away again, this time alone, and makes his way to Rūm, after some difficulty at the water-crossing. There his royal presence and heroic strength prevent his finding employment, and he is almost starving when befriended by a nobleman, who after a period of hospitality persuades his impressive guest to attend the feast at Cæsar's court, where his daughter Katāyūn<sup>6</sup> is to choose a husband. Katāyūn,

<sup>1</sup> See A. Rapp, *ZDMG*, xx, 1866, pp. 65-6.

<sup>2</sup> Athenæus XIII, 35, p. 575 ; F. Jacoby, *F. Gr. Hist.*, no. 125 fr. 5, vol. II B, pp. 660-1.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of these three names see Andreas, *apud* E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman und seine Vorläufer*, 3. Aufl., Leipzig, 1914, p. 48 n.

<sup>4</sup> F. Spiegel, *Eran. Alterthumskunde*, I, 1871, p. 665 n. Rohde (loc. cit., p. 49, and n. 2) attributes the notice of this similarity to Droysen, *Gesch. Alexanders d. Gr.* ; but I have been unable to trace the reference given by him in any of the four editions of this book available to me.

<sup>5</sup> *Šāhnāme* 14, 22-916.

<sup>6</sup> In a later verse (15, 30) Firdausi states that the princess's name was Nāhīd, but that Guštāsp called her Katāyūn.

who has loved Guštāsp in a dream, chooses him by garlanding him with flowers ; but Cæsar, enraged at her choice of a stranger, disowns her, and she and Guštāsp retire to the nobleman's house to live on his hospitality and the sale of Katāyūn's jewels. Some conventional adventures follow ; and the slaughter of a monstrous wolf and a dragon, together with an exhibition of prowess at polo and archery, persuades Cæsar to accept Guštāsp as a worthy son-in-law. He loads him with honours ; but eventually, at the persuasion of his brother, Zarēr, Guštāsp returns to Balkh, sending for Katāyūn to follow him.

A similar rendering of this story is given by Tha'ālibī<sup>1</sup> ; and a brief version, omitting most of Guštāsp's adventurings, appears in Mirkhond's *Rauḍatu's-Ṣafā*.<sup>2</sup> Here the central motif of the dream has vanished altogether, Katāyūn choosing Guštāsp merely at the dictate of fancy.<sup>3</sup>

The similarity of this story to that told by Chares is striking ; but so are the differences in detail between the two. It is the attempt to reconcile these differences which has made the stories the subject of discussion down the course of years.

When Spiegel first traced the connexion between the stories, he did so cautiously, merely remarking ' Hystaspes ist wol Gushtasp und Zariadres der Zarīr der erānischen Sage '.<sup>4</sup> Twenty years later, however, he made the identification boldly.<sup>5</sup> The interpretation he put forward was that the Avestan Vištāspa and his father Aurvaṭ.aspa were both mythological figures, whose link with Zaraθuštra had developed only with the course of time. The compound *aurvaṭ.aspa* ' having swift horses ' being used also as an epithet for the sun, Spiegel suggested that Vištāspa was in fact a child of the Sun-god, identified by Chares with Adonis. The difference in the settings—between Media in one version and Balkh in the other—he took as evidence of the original lack of connexion between the Vištāspa legend and the tales of the eastern *kavis* ; and the transference of the princess from northern lands to Greece he convincingly explained as a natural post-Alexandrine development, intended to aggrandize Vištāspa, as was the transference of the story to him from his brother Zarēr. The difficulty of explaining the development of Vištāspa, a mythical figure, into the historic champion of the Zoroastrian faith Spiegel met by

<sup>1</sup> Zotenberg, pp. 245–55.

<sup>2</sup> See D. Shea, *History of the Early Kings of Persia translated from . . . Mirkhond*, London, 1832, pp. 266–71.

<sup>3</sup> In Tha'ālibī's version the princess marks her choice with a garland, in Mirkhond's with an apple ; for a discussion of the latter development see Rohde, loc. cit., p. 49, n. 3. Rohde further groups together a set of stories, preserved from widely differing epochs in lands neighbouring on Iran, which he regards as stemming from the same original as Chares' tale ; namely, Aristotle's tale of the adventure of the Phocian Euxenus in Massilia (*Politica*, fr. 503, p. 499, Rose) ; Subhandu's story of Vāsavadattā, together with the two later Indian romances, the *Adventures of Kamrup* and the *Qissa-i Xawir Šāh* ; and the Georgian tale, *Miriani*.—For a general survey of the theme of love through dreams in literature see F. Geissler, *Bräutwerbung in der Weltliteratur*, Halle, 1955, pp. 31–4.

<sup>4</sup> loc. cit. For a discussion of the final vowel in Zarēr's name, see Nöldeke, *Pers.St.* II, p. 2, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Spiegel, *ZDMG*, XLV, 1891, pp. 196–8 ; ib., LI, 1898, pp. 192–3.

supposing that there might have been a 'real but shadowy Vištāspa' of Zoroaster's own day, to whom tales of the god were transferred.<sup>1</sup>

A similar interpretation was advanced almost simultaneously by Darmesteter,<sup>2</sup> who suggested, however, identifying the Adonis of Chares' story with Apām Napāt (for whom also the epithet *aurvaṭ.aspa* is used), and Aphrodite with Anāhita.<sup>3</sup> The connexion between their sons and Zoroaster he suggested to have been on a purely mythical plane, Zoroaster being regarded in later tradition as Haoma incarnate, and Anāhita, Apām Napāt, and Haoma forming 'un groupe mythique consacré'. The post-Alexandrine church inherited the myths of the god Vištāspa and the stories of the prophet, possibly already linked; and seeking a secular protector was led 'tout naturellement à faire du héros médique d'autrefois le prosélyte armé qu'invoquait le zoroastrisme moderne'.

An interpretation of the stories on a mythical plane was again advanced this century by Herzfeld,<sup>4</sup> who agreed broadly with Darmesteter in that he identified Chares' Aphrodite with Ardvīsūra. Adonis, 'ein Vegetationsgott', he sought to identify with the shadowy divinity Drvāspa on the strength of the latter's link with Gōš Urvan, which should make him 'eine Gottheit des Tierlebens', and thus vaguely approximate to a vegetation-god. The Avestan *Aurvaṭ.aspa* he identified, like Spiegel, with the sun.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he suggested, there were two versions of the myth, a western one with Adonis/Drvāspa, Media, and the river Tanais; and an eastern 'zrankische Version' with *Aurvaṭ.aspa*, eastern Iran and the lake Frazdānu. Later the versions met in Seistan, and Drvāspa and *Aurvaṭ.aspa* merged in the dubious form Luhrāsp. The god Luhrāsp then became a *kavi*. As a god he had a son, Zariadres, 'having golden weapons'; and this son came to be identified with the historical character Zairiwairi, 'having golden armour'. 'Damit wurde auch Vištāspa, der Beschützer Zarathuštras, wie sein Bruder, Sohn des Gottes Drvāspa-Arvataspa, wobei sein Name Vištāspa half.'<sup>6</sup>

These three interpretations represent the only detailed attempts to explain the divergences between the two stories as a whole. Pains have otherwise been largely expended on one point alone, namely on the study of the pair of names, Zairiwairi and Zariadres. These names, although so similar, are exasperatingly not the same. This fact was passed over by Spiegel, and has been lightly treated by others; but the more it has been studied, the clearer and more intractable it has become.

The evidence for the names is as follows: that of Zairiwairi is recorded

<sup>1</sup> *ZDMG*, LI, p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> See his *Zend-Avesta*, III, 1893, pp. lxxx-lxxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> cf. ib., II, pp. 364-5. Darmesteter points out that 'c'est une coïncidence, au moins curieuse, que le nom d'Anāhita reparait dans Firdausi' (II, p. lxxxii, n. 1); see above, p. 463, n. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Arch. Mitt.*, I, 1929-30, pp. 170-80.

<sup>5</sup> Herzfeld does not refer, however, to Spiegel's earlier interpretation, of which he seems unaware.

<sup>6</sup> loc. cit., p. 180.

twice in the Avesta, in Yt. v, 112 and Yt. XIII, 101.<sup>1</sup> Both passages are regarded as trustworthy sources. The name Zariadres is recorded by Chares; and it appears as Zariadris in Strabo, who gives it as the name of one of the two generals of Antiochus the Great who divided Armenia between them.<sup>2</sup> The difference in the final vowel is not regarded as of importance, occurring as it does in foreign records. A small group of coins was identified as belonging to this Zariadris, ruler of Sophene; but the legend on one of them was read as Zadriad, and his name emended accordingly to Zadriadis.<sup>3</sup> This form of the name had some currency<sup>4</sup> before Marquart effectively challenged the attribution of these coins.<sup>5</sup> In this century basalt slabs have been found by Lake Sevan on which the name Zariadr has been read.<sup>6</sup> The inscriptions are attributed to the second century B.C.

There is thus sound evidence for the genuineness of both names in their ancient forms. Subsequently the name Zariadres became, regularly, Armenian Zareh,<sup>7</sup> and in this form it is more frequently attested.<sup>8</sup> The town Zarehavan is held to derive its name from Zariadris of Sophene<sup>9</sup>; and Marquart has identified the legendary hero Zareh, under whom the Armenians were supposed to have thrown off the yoke of the Assyrians,<sup>10</sup> with the same historical ruler.<sup>11</sup> Other bearers of the name were Zareh, son of Artashes III<sup>12</sup>; Zareh, ruler of Greater Sophene at the time of Tiran II<sup>13</sup>; and Zareh, iṣṣan of Mōkk'.<sup>14</sup>

The Avestan Zairiware became by the Middle Iranian period Zarēr (Pahl. **𐭥𐭫𐭥𐭭**); and it is under this name that Aurvataspā's son appears in the *Ayādgar-e Zarērān* and the later Pahlavi books. In a Parthian Manichaean text the name appears, with *l* for *r*, as Zalēl (*zlyl*).<sup>15</sup> The form is not a regular development of Zairiware, which would be rather Zarwar/Zarūr<sup>16</sup>. Strangely enough, however,

<sup>1</sup> A third passage, Yt. v, 117, is debated, Darmesteter (*Et. Ir.*, II, p. 229) regarding the occurrence of the name there as original, Bartholomae (*Air. Wb.*, 1682) considering it an insertion.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo, XI, 14, 15, p. 531 f.

<sup>3</sup> References with Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 382 b; Lagarde, *Arm. St.*, p. 53, no. 762; Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 37–9; Hübschmann, *Pers. St.*, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. Gutschmid, *Gesch. Irans.*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> In the phrase 'rthšy br zy zrytr; see A. Y. Borisov *apud* Minorsky, *J. Royal Cent. Asian Society*, xxx, 1943, pp. 82–3; Dupont-Sommer, *Syria*, xxv, 1946–8, pp. 53–66.

<sup>7</sup> See Marquart, *op. cit.*, p. 39; Hübschmann, *Arm. Gr.*, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> See Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 381 b; Hübschmann, loc. cit.

<sup>9</sup> See Marquart, *Rev. Ét. Arméniennes*, VIII, 1, 1928, p. 218; Hübschmann, loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> See Pseudo-Agath., Langlois, *Coll. des hist. de l'Arménie*, I, p. 198 a; Mos. Xor. I, 31.

<sup>11</sup> See Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>12</sup> Mos. Xor., II, 53, 55. Marquart (*ZDMG*, XLIX, 1895, pp. 654–5) regards this Artashes of Moses' *History* as a composite figure; and would identify his son Zareh with 'Sariaster', son of Tigranes I (a corruption of Zariadris?), in the king-list of Valerius Max. 9, 12, Ext. 3; see also his *Untersuchungen*, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup> Faust. Byz., 3, 12.

<sup>14</sup> *Patmut'w'n S'rboyn Nersisi Part'ewi* (Sop'erk' Haykakank' No. 6), Venice, 1853, p. 25. (I owe this detailed reference to the kindness of my colleague Dr. Dowsett.)

<sup>15</sup> See Henning, *ZDMG*, xc, p. 5; *BSOAS*, XI, p. 73, U 4.

<sup>16</sup> cf. Bastavairi > Bastūr; see Nöldeke, *Pers. St.*, II, p. 2, n. 1; Hübschmann, *Pers. St.*, p. 170. Benveniste, however, (*JA*, 1932, I, p. 246, n. 1), compares \*dipiṣara > dipēr.

it is the exact Middle Persian equivalent of Zariadres, through \*Zarehr, and would have the Armenian equivalent Zareh.<sup>1</sup> Thus the two names fall together in the Middle Iranian period, and become indistinguishable. The following examples of the name Zarēr are connected with older Zairiwairi rather than with Zariadres only because of their Zoroastrian background.

A Zarēr is mentioned in the *Mujmalu't-Tawārīx*<sup>2</sup> as one of the sons of Gōdarz at the court of Kai Xusrau. Presented in this connexion, together with Gēv and Bahrām, this Zarēr is presumably to be regarded as an Arsacid prince,<sup>3</sup> and possibly therefore to be identified with the Zarār who, as Nöldeke has pointed out, appears in one of the Arsacid king-lists.<sup>4</sup> A second example of the name occurs in the spurious Sassanian genealogy, in which, according to the *Bundahišn*, a certain Zarēr, son of Sāsān, was grandson of Vahuman, son of Spandiyād.<sup>5</sup> Here the name is probably no more than a repetition, in order to fill a generation, of that of Zairiwairi, son of Aurvataspa. Thirdly, a Zarēr appears in a list of priests given in the *Bundahišn*.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Armenian historian Lazarus has preserved the name of Zareh, son of Pērōz, killed in battle by Balāš.<sup>7</sup> Since this prince lived in a century when the Kayanian heroic names were beginning to reappear,<sup>8</sup> it is a fair assumption that he was named after the Avestan Zairiwairi.

From these data the fact emerges that there were two names, Zariadres and Zairiwairi, both rare, but both well-authenticated; and that, although these names fell together in the Middle Iranian period, at the time of Chares of Mytilene they must have been still distinct.

A number of suggestions have been made to explain the problem which thus arises. Darmesteter suggested emending the name in Chares' version to Zariadres, and taking it as an intermediary form between Zairiwairi and Zarēr.<sup>9</sup> In this he was followed by Justi,<sup>10</sup> Hübschmann,<sup>11</sup> and others. Marquart, however, pointing to the sound evidence for the existence of the name Zariadres, suggested rather regarding the Avestan name as a 'falsche Umsetzung' for Zarēr, which he sought to replace by \*Zari.wadri.<sup>12</sup> Nöldeke once toyed with the idea that Vištāspa might have originally had two brothers<sup>13</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> See Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> Tehran ed., p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> As such he might, conceivably, be a Zariadres rather than a Zairiwairi.

<sup>4</sup> See his *Tabari*, p. 2, n. 3. The form *zarār* appears elsewhere for *zarēr*, ز and ز both being used to represent Pers. *ē*; see Nöldeke, *Pers. Stud.*, II, p. 2, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Gt. Bd.*, p. 232<sup>11</sup>; *Ind. Bd.*, Ch. XXXI, 30 (West, *P.T.*, I, p. 138); in Tabari (see Nöldeke, p. 2, with n. 3) this name appears as *zarār*, *zarān*, *zarēn*.

<sup>6</sup> *Gt. Bd.*, p. 237<sup>7</sup>; *Ind. Bd.*, Ch. XXXIII, 4 (West, *P.T.*, I, p. 146).

<sup>7</sup> Laz. P'arp., Ch. 94 (Venice, 1933, pp. 555, 559); Langlois, *Coll. des hist. de l'Arménie*, II, p. 360 b; see Nöldeke, *Tabari*, p. 133, n. 6; Justi, *Namenbuch*, p. 381 b; Patkanean, *JA*, 1866, I, p. 175, n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> See Nöldeke, *Iran. Nat. Epos*, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Zend-Avesta*, II, p. 393, n. 140; III, p. lxxxii.

<sup>11</sup> *AG*, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup> *Pers. St.*, II, p. 2, n. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Namenbuch*, p. 382 b.

<sup>12</sup> *Untersuchungen*, p. 39.

and Herzfeld's explanation of a fused identity is on the same lines.<sup>1</sup> No agreement has been reached.

With this problem outstanding, and a number of others unresolved, Nöldeke came to treat the connexion between Chares' story and the Kayanian legends with considerable reserve, pointing out that 'eine solche Geschichte passt in jede Zeit'.<sup>2</sup> Despite this caution, however, he evidently continued to entertain the possibility of the connexion, being prepared, for example, to concede the identity here of the Tanaïs with the Jaxartes, thus modifying the geographical discrepancy.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars have shown less caution, in that they have placed a bold reliance upon the postulated connexion. Thus Marquart used Chares' story as proof of the early widespread knowledge in the west of the eastern heroic legends.<sup>4</sup> In this he has been vigorously followed by Christensen.<sup>5</sup> Jackson treats the story as providing 'a new point of contact between the West and the East',<sup>6</sup> and Bidez and Cumont cite it among their sources to show Greek familiarity with Hystaspes, patron of Zoroaster.<sup>7</sup> Even Lescot, who sees in Chares' legend the remote ancestor of the Kurdish cycle *Memê Alan*, and who regards the Kurds as the Asiatic 'barbarians' who recited it in the 4th century, admits an eastern origin for the story, and supposes that it was only after its adoption by the Kurds that it became gradually acclimatized in the west.<sup>8</sup> A clear case, such as can, I think, be based upon the evidence available, has yet to be stated for there having been originally no connexion whatsoever between Chares' legend and the Avestan Vištâspa, all deductions from this assumed connexion being therefore invalid.

The facts as we have them are as follows: the geographical setting of Chares' story is fairly detailed, and is remote from that of the Kayanian legends. Not one of the proper names, moreover, except that of Hystaspes, appears in Kayanian tradition. The tale is told by Chares as if it were already ancient in the 4th century B.C.,<sup>9</sup> and the ancestry of the heroes is treated as a matter of hearsay, not of fact. The brothers are said indeed to be sprung from gods; and Chares speaks of scenes from their story being painted on temple-walls. This suggests a connexion with a cult, which is at first sight puzzling in view of the apparently straightforward romantic nature of the story. It is not hard, however, to imagine this old legend, whatever its origin, being adopted into the cult of some god of love. Athenæus himself cites it as an instance of the strange

<sup>1</sup> loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup> *Nat. Epos*, p. 4; Nöldeke adds 'und der Name Hystaspes kommt öfter vor'; but since the relatively frequent occurrences of the name (see Justi, *Namenbuch*, pp. 372a-373a) can otherwise all be ascribed to the influence either of the Achæmenian royal family or of the Kayanian tradition, this particular argument is perhaps hardly justifiable.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.*, p. 4, n. 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Untersuchungen*, p. 21, n. 91; see also Grousset, *Histoire de l'Arménie*, p. 83, n. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Gestes des rois*, pp. 136, 137.

<sup>6</sup> Zoroaster, p. 73.

<sup>7</sup> *Les mages hellénisés*, II, p. 360.

<sup>8</sup> R. Lescot, *Textes kurdes*, II, Beyrouth, 1942, pp. xiv-xvii.

<sup>9</sup> This fact is remarked by Nöldeke, *op. cit.*, p. 4; see also Andreas, *apud* Rohde, loc. cit., pp. 48, n. 3, 52, n. 2.

workings of love. Chares is in any case our only early authority for the story ; and since no disproof of his veracity is possible in this instance, the best course open to us seems to be to give due consideration to his statements.

Rapp accordingly cited the legend among texts concerned with Iranian mythology ; and the three considered attempts to link it with the Avestan Vištāspa have all treated it as myth, and in so doing have managed to explain almost all the divergences in names and settings. Nevertheless, these explanations have not won general acceptance, their chief weakness being the difficulty of reconciling a mythological interpretation with the strong Zoroastrian tradition that Vištāspa was a historical character, of royal and not divine descent. Only Darmesteter was bold enough to challenge this tradition altogether, Spiegel and Herzfeld seeking to accommodate it, however uneasily, within their theories. On this rock, however, all three interpretations must be held, I think, to have foundered.

On the other hand, the more generally held historical explanation appears to have been somewhat casually adopted, since it has never been argued in detail. It subsists by ignoring the implied connexion of Chares' story with a cult,<sup>1</sup> and also the differences in names. The difference in setting is explained as an early acclimatization of Kayanian stories in the west—or rather, the connexion with the Avestan Vištāspa having been taken for granted, the story is regarded as proof of such an acclimatization. Since this is the nearest approach to a justification of the historical explanation, let us examine it in detail.

It is evidently not supposed that the legend of Zariadres and Odatis was the only Kayanian story known to the Achæmenians. The theory is that this and other legends followed in the wake of Zoroastrianism, and that their acclimatization was part of the adoption of the prophet as a Mede. If this were so, it would provide us with the earliest testimony we have for that process, which does not show its influence among classical writers before the beginning of our era.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the question of the country of his origin, however, Zoroaster's name itself was demonstrably familiar to the Greeks by the 4th century<sup>3</sup> ; and this makes it a little strange that Chares should not have mentioned that the brothers in his tale were in later life closely connected with the great prophet, thus giving to the story an added interest. Instead he states that their legend was painted on temple-walls. Now it can only be supposed that Vištāspa's fame reached Persia closely bound up with Zoroastrianism ; and however capaciously and however soon orthodox Zoroastrianism adopted other cults, it is hard to conceive a Zoroastrian temple of the 4th or any other century adorned with murals such as these. Therefore one has either flatly to disbelieve this statement by Chares—our only witness ;

<sup>1</sup> Christensen (*Kayanides*, p. 119, n. 4) remarks the connexion, but only to dismiss it : ' A mon avis, il ne faut pas attacher trop d'importance à la forme mythologique qu'a reçue la légende dans l'arrangement des auteurs grecs '.

<sup>2</sup> See Bidez and Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés*, I, pp. 23–4 ; Jackson, *Zoroaster*, pp. 189–90.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Bidez and Cumont, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 5–19.



or to suppose the improbable fact that, Vištāspa's fame having spread to the west in connexion with Zoroaster, a romantic legend of his brother's youth came to be adopted there with enthusiasm by a non-Zoroastrian cult.

Chares' silence as to a link with Zoroaster might by itself be insignificant ; his statement as to the temple-paintings might by itself be disbelieved ; but taken in conjunction these facts make a connexion of his story with Vištāspa, patron of Zoroaster, implausible in the extreme.

Further, in seeking to link the story with the Kayanian legends, we must consider the character of its final version, as preserved for us by Firdausi and Tha'ālibī. Chares' tale, compressed as it is, has all the marks of an intelligent and aristocratic handling. It is well told, with dignity, a choice of significant detail and a sense of unity and climax. The later version is essentially vulgar, and is inflated with irrelevant detail under which it loses point and progression. Much of this detail is of the market-place, and alien to a courtly tradition ; for example, Guštāsp's search for a job, before gaping onlookers, as clerk or smith<sup>1</sup> ; the selling of Katāyūn's jewel, with a statement of the amount it fetched<sup>2</sup> ; and the practical disposal of the spoils of the chase.<sup>3</sup> Guštāsp's own conduct is often ill-motivated and unadmirable ; and his presence at the wedding-feast becomes little more than compliance with a friend's fortune-hunting on his behalf.<sup>4</sup> The beauty has gone out of the story, and it no longer lays hold on the imagination.

It can justly be argued that this is a natural development, the story having passed from mouth to mouth, and from nobleman to shopkeeper, down the course of centuries. The significant fact is that the Kayanian legends, as preserved for us in the *Šāhnāme* and other late works, have not undergone the same debasement. By the time they were committed to writing under the Sassanians, they too were clearly in a measure corrupted, being shadowy, confused, and interpenetrated with alien matter ; but they remain aristocratic, a court-literature. Old and half-forgotten, they have evidently descended through a different milieu from that which transmitted the tale of Guštāsp and Katāyūn. This fact appears to me decisive. Given all the other irreconcilable data, it becomes too much to suppose as well that this one story, travelling to Persia as part of the Kayanian cycle, became separated there from the other stories, to circulate independently of them for generations before being at last re-attached, in its proper place, at the final gathering up of the cycle.

The cumulative evidence points to the true explanation being rather the following : the story of Zariadres and Odis was in fact a Median legend, already ancient when Chares heard it. This legend was connected with a cult ; and its character, together with the names of Adonis and Aphrodite, indicates that this cult was of a god of love. This god is possibly, as Darmesteter suggested,

<sup>1</sup> *Šāhnāme*, 14, 157-62, 186-200.

<sup>2</sup> *Šāh.*, 14, 280-5 ; Zotenberg, *Tha'ālibī*, p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> *Šāh.*, 14, 287-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Šāh.*, 14, 246-8.

the widely-worshipped Anāhita, elsewhere identified with Aphrodite.<sup>1</sup> This interpretation is perhaps borne out by the single occurrence of the name Nāhīd in Firdausi's version. The story had nothing to do with the tales of the eastern *kavis*, or with early Zoroastrianism. In the course of time the names of its heroes, Zariadres and Hystaspes, developed regularly into Zarēr and Guštāsp, and that of Odatis came to be replaced by the name of a Greek princess.<sup>2</sup> The story was still current, but not in aristocratic circles, in Sassanian times, when the Kayanian legends were collected and written down; and since by then its heroes' names exactly coincided with those of Kay Guštāsp and his brother, in one version—but evidently only one—of the recorded cycle the story came to be attached to them. In the process the action was transferred from Zarēr to the more eminent Guštāsp. It is noteworthy that the adventure is assigned to Guštāsp's youth, before he came to take part in affairs of state; this accords with the general practice of ascribing spurious happenings to the unrecorded youth of famous men, no effort being then needed to reconcile them with actual events. The story of Katāyūn is in fact to be regarded as a wholly alien intrusion into the Kayanian cycle.

The chief importance of this interpretation, if it be accepted, is that we lose hereby the one piece of evidence thought to exist for a knowledge of the Kayanian legends in Achæmenian Persia. Zoroastrianism was evidently accepted by the later Achæmenians; but this fact does not by itself imply that the heroic tales of Vištāspa's ancestors were also known to them. The faith presumably spread to Persia and the courts of her rulers through proselytizers; and it is likely that such men preached the prophet and his teachings, rather than discoursing on the *kavis*.<sup>3</sup> Even though the names of Vištāspa's forbears came to be adopted into the Zoroastrian liturgy, and some of their great deeds accepted as forming part of the universal struggle between right and wrong, yet the character of their stories as we possess them suggests strongly that they belong in origin to a secular literature of entertainment, which presumably flourished under the patronage of the Zoroastrian church rather than furnishing any essential part of its beliefs and teachings. It is a problem to decide to what extent, before the rise of the Sassanians, knowledge of this literature had spread beyond the borders of Airyanəm Vaējō.

Since native records barely exist before Sassanian times, one is driven in this matter, as so often, to Armenian sources for information. There is no doubt that, during the Achæmenian and Parthian epochs, Armenia herself

<sup>1</sup> In making this suggestion Darmesteter was scrupulous to point out that all female divinities tended at periods of syncretism to be assimilated to Aphrodite; see his *Zend-Avesta*, II, p. 365.

<sup>2</sup> Nöldeke (*Nat. Epos*, p. 4, n. 3) was prepared at a pinch to see in Katāyūn's name a trans-mogrification of *Κωμερώ* or *Κωμηρώ*, that of the sister of the Empress Theodora.

<sup>3</sup> In this connexion it is perhaps significant that when Vištāspa's name became known to the Greeks, probably in the 1st century before or the 1st century after Christ, it was in connexion with a vision-literature, and not with any martial exploits in defence of the faith; see Bidez and Cumont, op. cit., I, pp. 215–23; Benveniste, *Rev. de l'hist. des religions*, vol. 106, 1932, pp. 372–80.

had a flourishing oral literature, in which heroic poetry evidently played an important part. Armenian minstrels celebrated the deeds of their kings and princes, and their songs, handed down the centuries, furnished ungrateful Christian chroniclers with material for their histories. In the course of time legends of the Avestan gods and heroes, and tales of Rostom Sagčik, entered the repertory of the Armenian singers, and became immensely popular. In Christian Armenia the recital of heroic stories was in general frowned upon by clerics: 'the grandsons of Cain invented the art of the minstrel, and the granddaughters rouge and kohl'.<sup>1</sup> The Iranian legends may be presumed to have had their full share of this disapproval; and it is a tribute to their vitality that they nevertheless flourished, and continued in circulation down to this century. After the 11th century Firdausi undoubtedly exercised much influence on their telling; but stories remained current which are not to be found in his *Šāhnāme*.<sup>2</sup> In popular tradition known from the 19th century, the Kayanian heroes have become so much at home that they are even presented at times as kinsmen of the great Armenian heroes, the 'mad' Sassunians.<sup>3</sup>

The problem is to discover at what stage these eastern stories entered Armenian tradition. For the pre-Sassanian period the evidence appears to be confined to proper names. There are two examples. One is the name Šavarš, representing Avestan Syāvaršan, which occurs several times.<sup>4</sup> Thus in a legendary king-list given by Mar Abas the name appears for one of the rulers of Armenia before Zarmayr, who fell, in story, at the battle of Troy.<sup>5</sup> Another Šavarš, nephew of Tigran, is reputed to have lived at the time of Astyages.<sup>6</sup> In our own era the name was borne by a member of the Kamsarakan family, in the 4th century. It occurs also in the district-name Šavaršan or Šavaršakan; and as an element in the flower-name 'Blood-of-Siyāvaš' (Pers. xūn-i syāvašan).<sup>7</sup> The form of the name, with initial š for sy, suggests an eastern Iranian influence, possibly exerted through the Parni overlords of the Parthians. From this it seems probable that the stories about Syāvaršan were introduced into Armenia during the Arsacid period, and not before. The occurrence of the name both in legend and in history suggests that they became very popular there.

The second name is that of Spandarat, known only from one occurrence in the 4th century A.D.<sup>8</sup> This name, regarded by Marquart as the Partho-Armenian form of Spentodāta,<sup>9</sup> could also, as Hübschmann pointed out,<sup>10</sup> represent O.Pers. \*Spantarāta, which is the etymology given by Justi.<sup>11</sup> If

<sup>1</sup> Vardan Vardapet, *Commentary on Genesis*, Ch. 13 (the reference, which I owe, together with the translation, to Dr. Dowsett, is from *Nov Baġirk'*, Venice, 1836, under *gusan*).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g. Bagrat Chalathianz, *Z. d. Vereins f. Volkskunde*, xiv, 1904, pp. 295 ff., 386 ff.; xvii, 1907, pp. 414-5; xviii, 1908, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., B. Chalathianz, *op. cit.*, xiv, pp. 40, 296; xvii, p. 420.

<sup>4</sup> See Justi, *Namenbuch*, pp. 299b-300a; Hübschmann, *Pers. St.*, p. 261; *Arm. Gramm.*, p. 61; Marquart, *Untersuchungen*, p. 21, n. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Mos. Xor. i, xix.

<sup>6</sup> Tschamtschean, i, 186, 39 (cited by Justi, *loc. cit.*).

<sup>7</sup> *HAG*, p. 213.

<sup>8</sup> Mos. Xor., iii, xxxi; Faust. Byz. iv, xix.

<sup>9</sup> *ZDMG*, 49, 1895, p. 639, n. 4; *Caucasica*, viii, 1931, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> *AG*, p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> *Namenbuch*, p. 306 a.

the name occurred in isolation, it is difficult to see how a decision could be reached on this point. Moreover, it would then be useless in any case for evidence of a knowledge of the Kayanian traditions, since, if Ctesias is to be trusted, the name Sfendadates existed, independent of Kayanian influence, in the west in the 6th century B.C.<sup>1</sup> As it happens, however, the name occurs, not in isolation, but together with that of Šavarš, being borne by the father of the above-mentioned Kamsarakan. This makes it very probable that the name does in fact represent Avestan Spentodāta, an old Partho-Armenian form having apparently been preserved in the Kamsarakan family against the Perso-Armenian Spandiat.

The evidence of these two names suggests, therefore, that the Arsacids brought legends of Syāvaršan to Armenia from the east, and also some concerning Spentodāta. The former appear to have been the more popular under their rule; and this is consonant with the belief expressed by several scholars that Zoroastrianism itself had a weak hold, if any, upon Armenia during the Parthian period.<sup>2</sup> As Spandiat (the Sassanian form), the Kayanian hero later became celebrated in Armenia. His name figures in the genealogy of the Bagratids,<sup>3</sup> and his legend developed a strong local connexion with Mount Sabalan.<sup>4</sup>

It was apparently during the Sassanian period that tales of the 'Pišdādīān' cycle entered the Armenian minstrel's repertoire; for Moses of Xoren, writing supposedly in the 7th or the 8th century, treats the tales of Biurasp Aždahak and Hredun as of Persian origin.<sup>5</sup> It is the Persians too, he says, who celebrate the deeds of Rostom.<sup>6</sup> The clarity with which he distinguishes both groups of stories from native traditions suggests that when he wrote they were not yet many generations current in his own land.

It seems, therefore, that it was the Kayanian heroic legends which were widely celebrated by the Parthians; and this accords with the fact that

<sup>1</sup> *Persica*, 2, 10.

<sup>2</sup> See Gauthiot, *MSL*, xvi, p. 318; Meillet, *JA*, 1902, I, pp. 548-9; *MSL*, xvii, p. 242; *Rev. Ét. Armén.*, I, 3, pp. 233-6; *apud* Dumézil, *ib.*, vi, 2, p. 68; Benveniste, *ib.*, vii, 2, pp. 7-9.

<sup>3</sup> See Justi, *loc. cit.*; Gutschmid, *Kl. Schr.*, III, p. 294; Marquart, *ZDMG*, 49, p. 639, n. 4.

<sup>4</sup> See Grigor Chalathianz, *WZKM*, x, 1896, p. 224; R. v. Stackelberg, *ib.*, xii, 1898, pp. 230-4. Marquart (*Caucasica*, viii, pp. 87-8) sought to establish a theory of an ancient cult of Spentodāta in the west, based largely on the identification, in a late source, of the Xazar god T'angri Xan with a figure 'whom the Persians call Aspandiat' (*Mos. Kał.*, II, 40); see Brosset, *Hist. de la Géorgie*, add. et éclaircissements, p. 484; v. Stackelberg, *ZDMG*, 45, 1891, p. 623, and n. 5; Marquart, *ZDMG*, 49, p. 639, n. 4; *HAG*, p. 74. The Xazar god is described as a 'gigantic, savage monster', who is worshipped with sacrifice of horses in a tall grove of trees. His own priests claimed, however, that when propitiated he healed the sick, gave wealth and brought rain to parched fields (*Mos. Kał.*, II, 41). It does not seem possible, however, to attach much weight to the identification, at a relatively late date, of such an alien deity with 'Aspandiat'; and Marquart's highly ingenious theory, linking together Gaumāta, the Massagetae, and the Avestan traditions, builds more on the few facts available than their scantiness would seem to warrant.

<sup>5</sup> *Mos. Xor.*, supp. to Bk. I; on the words *aždahak* (apparently borrowed by the Armenians from Sassanian Persia), and *višap* (known to them in Parthian times), see Benveniste, *Rev. Ét. Armén.*, vii, 1, 1927, pp. 7-9.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.*, II, viii.

these legends have come down to us freely intermingled with tales of Parthian kings.<sup>1</sup> Recently <sup>2</sup> I ventured to point out that the manner of the intermingling suggests that it was not politic and deliberate, but arose unconsciously through a weakening of tradition towards the end of a long period of oral transmission. Presumably minstrels who had inherited both sets of stories began gradually to forget them, and in forgetting them allowed incidents from one cycle to fill the growing gaps in the other. This, one may presume, they did without any sense of distortion or anachronism, chronology not being a strong point of oral poets. Persian minstrels would presumably have drawn on Persian tales for the same purpose; one can therefore safely deduce that the Kayanian material has descended through Parthian singers.

All the evidence points, however, to the actual recording of the material as part of a 'national' epic having been carried out by Sassanian Persians. Had the Persian collectors found the material they needed at their own door-steps, they would presumably have looked no farther. The fact that they went to Parthian sources suggests, therefore, that the legends of the *kavis* were unknown, or at best only slightly known, in Persia itself.

Further, there are small pieces of evidence to suggest that it was to the north-east the collectors turned, rather than to the north-west. The importance of the north-east in the cycle has been frequently stressed, and has been assumed to be due to three factors: Airyanəm Vaējō lay in the north-east; the north-east was the gateway for the barbarian hordes from the steppes, so that the old epic struggle was renewed there perforce from generation to generation; and the north-east was the home of the Persian Renaissance, and of Firdausi. Firdausi was, however, a poet singularly faithful to his sources, and so the third factor can be to a certain measure discounted. As to the second, Parthians and Persians fought many a vigorous contest elsewhere down the ages; and had Achæmenians or the southern *mulūku't-tawā'if* adopted the legends, it is hard to believe that they would not have given the *kavis*, sporadically at least, western habitations and a part in western events.<sup>3</sup> What the Magi sought to do politically, minstrels would probably have done from professional reasons, to give the greater pleasure to their listeners. An important factor in the continuing prominence of the north-east may well be, therefore, that it was from minstrels of the north-east that the recorded versions of the *kavi*-legends were actually learnt.

This interpretation agrees, further, with the absorption of the Rustam legends into the cycle—legends which are interwoven in the same casual manner as those of the Parthians, and with as complete a disregard for a reasonable

<sup>1</sup> See Rawlinson, *JRGS*, ix, 1839, pp. 114–6; Nöldeke, *Pers. St.*, II, pp. 29–34; *Nat. Epos*, pp. 7–9; Marquart, *ZDMG*, 49, pp. 628–72; *Caucasica*, VIII, pp. 78–113.

<sup>2</sup> *Serta Cantabrigiensia*, F. Steiner Verlag, Mainz, 1954, pp. 49–51.

<sup>3</sup> Thus, in spite of the influence of Firdausi and the written tradition, the Armenian singers have come to mingle their local place-names—*Kafkufa*, *Narti*, *Abraset*, *Sassun*—with those of far-off and unfamiliar *Qeabl* and *Zabl*; see B. Chalathianz, *Z. d. Vereins f. Volkskunde*, XVII, p. 417.

chronology. We may assume, therefore, that they too came to be mingled with the Kayanian legends through a common tradition, and through transmission in a common milieu. The discovery of a Rustam fragment in Sogdian has confirmed the belief that Rustam was truly a Saka hero, and not a hero of the indigenous, pre-Saka population of Seistan<sup>1</sup>; and since the Sakas and the eastern Parthians became closely allied in E. Iran, a fusion of their stories there may be taken as a natural development.

A further argument for the north-eastern transmission is of a more tenuous character. Of all the Parthian kings who appear in the Kayanian legends one only has been identified with anything approaching conviction, and that is the great Gōdarz, usually equated with Gotarzes II (A.D. 39–51 ?).<sup>2</sup> This Gotarzes and his father-in-law Artabanus were both ‘champions of the Arsacid homelands as against the westernized kings brought up in Media, Mesopotamia, or even Rome’<sup>3</sup>; and Gotarzes himself was particularly connected with Hyrcania, where he more than once withdrew when his fortunes were overcast. The celebration of such a king by minstrels of the north-east is therefore readily to be understood.

It appears probable, therefore, that in seeking for the best sources of information about the kings of ancient Airyanəm Vāējō, the Sassanians went to lands over which these kings had themselves once ruled.<sup>4</sup> This was, of course, also the area in which the Zoroastrian church had its beginnings; and the question arises, under what patronage had the legends flourished in their native soil? This is a problem never likely to be satisfactorily solved; but its consideration is nevertheless too interesting entirely to forgo. In the first place, there seems no reason to assume an active church-patronage for the legends in the early days of Zoroastrianism. Had such a patronage existed, the stories would probably have spread swiftly in the wake of the faith, and being themselves of stirring quality, would probably have kept their hold in other places, regardless of religious ebb and flow. Further, an active clerical interest would almost certainly have kept them free from contamination with later matter—let alone with such purely pagan stories as those of Rustam. The likely course of events seems rather that, a number of years after the prophet’s death,<sup>5</sup> the priests sought to enrich the liturgy with the names—and a selection of the deeds—of Vištāspa’s pagan ancestors; and that to do so they were compelled to draw on a current literature of entertainment, which preserved both names and deeds. This literature must have come thereby to have an enhanced merit, as concerning itself with matter pertaining to the faith. The church’s own

<sup>1</sup> Thus Nöldeke, *Nat. Epos*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See Marquart, *ZDMG*, 49, p. 641; N. C. Debevoise, *A Political History of Parthia*, pp. 152–74.

<sup>3</sup> See Minorsky, *BSOAS*, xii, 1947, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> See Henning, *Zoroaster*, pp. 42–3.

<sup>5</sup> See *Serta Cantabrigiensia*, p. 47, where it was pointed out that ‘in Yt. 13 King Vištāspa is mentioned among the early adherents of the faith (vv. 99–100), whereas his heathen ancestors are introduced independently and considerably later in the liturgy (v. 132)’.

approval may well have gone no further, however, than a toleration ; one can imagine a Zoroastrian priest of the 5th century B.C. joining sentiment with the Christian priest of the 13th century A.D., who, while condemning minstrels as such, wrote : ‘ sunt qui . . . cantant gesta principum et vitas sanctorum. Bene possunt sustineri tales ’.<sup>1</sup>

Such toleration may even have resulted in an indirect patronage of the legends by the church, in that it may have encouraged the pious to open their purses to the singers of these stories.<sup>2</sup> The direct patronage of a court-literature must come from princes, however ; and, princes being men, it seems that in many—if not most—cases the continuance of a particular group of stories is due, not so much to their own merit or general interest, but to their particular and flattering connexion with their patrons.<sup>3</sup> In this respect the preservation of the cycle among the Parthians may be of significance. There is no reason to suppose that the conquering Achæmenians wiped out the Kayanians root and branch ; and princes of this family would no doubt have provided ready patrons of the stories. A branch of the Arsacids, settled near their homelands, may well have intermarried with descendants of the old royal line, thus inheriting their traditions and keeping them in continued circulation. A further intermarriage of such an eastern branch with a Saka family would perhaps explain also the close interweaving of the Rustam cycle with the stock of Kayanian and Parthian traditions.

Whoever their effective patrons, the transmitters of the tales were apparently the court-minstrels of north-eastern Iran, who preserved them in an aristocratic and martial convention for almost 1,000 years, manipulating them according to their craft, until finally they were acquired and crystallized by the Sassanians, who were in search of ancient faith and splendour. It is in the Sassanian period that the tales of Rustam began to spread, travelling westwards into Armenia and down the trade-routes into Arabia ; and the reason seems to be that these tales, long known in north-eastern Iran, had there become inextricably interwoven with stories of the Kayanians and of Parthian kings ; so that when the Sassanian rulers, under strong clerical influence, extended their patronage to the legends of the Kayanians, their pretended ancestors, they became also, of necessity, patrons of the Rustam and Arsacid cycles. Thus these stories came to enjoy a new royal favour, and were officially adopted in a unified empire,

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Cabham, *Penitential*, quoted by J. Faral, *Les jongleurs en France*, Paris, 1910, p. 44 ; see C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, London, 1952, pp. 424–5.

<sup>2</sup> The relative indifference of the minstrels themselves to contemporary religion is perhaps shown by the absence of Volageses' name from among their Parthian heroes ; although Marquart (*ZDMG*, 49, pp. 635–40) suggested that the Vištāspa of the legends was remodelled on the likeness of Volageses, the two champions of the faith thus merging into one.

<sup>3</sup> This fact was recently emphasized to me in a letter by Mrs. N. K. C. Chadwick, in connexion with my somewhat rash remarks (*Serta Cantabrigiensia*, p. 45) about ‘ chance or merit ’ dictating the survival of particular groups of stories. An interesting example from modern Iran of the influence which pride in ancestry can have on the recitation of a heroic poem—in this case the Kurdish *Memé Alan*—is given by R. Lescot in the introduction to his *Textes kurdes*, II, Beyrouth, 1942.

spreading rapidly through all its domains. It was these legends, remote in origin from the Sassanians, which were recorded by them as glorifying their kings. Their own old stories were evidently almost all allowed to fall into oblivion, unless, like that of Zariadres and Odati, they had the fortune to be swept up and absorbed unconsciously into the new 'national' tradition.